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SUBJECT: EVALUATING PARIS PACT ON AFGHANISTAN: OPTIMIZING THE NEXT PHASE

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SUMMARY

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: A May 14 briefing for donor and participant countries by the consultant UNODC hired to assess the Paris Pact emphasized inefficiencies in expert roundtable meetings, the unsustainable Pact footprint, the Pact's enduring political utility, and under-utilization of the ADAM system, all observations which attendees welcomed. The consultant noted that the Automated Donor Assistance Mechanism (ADAM), which lists all donor assistance programs in Afghanistan with the aim of avoiding duplication, is technically sound but under-utilized and that the 15 Paris Pact expert roundtables held in the last five years developed many recommendations with little follow-up action. He stressed that the Paris Pact should develop in depth, but not breadth because the current wide coverage, from Afghanistan to the Caspian and Black Sea, is not sustainable. Furthermore, that the increase in members and round-table participants is an inefficient way to utilize resources and ineffective in making concrete decisions. He concluded that the donors would have to decide whether they would want to continue to fund the Paris Pact, which is entering its third phase. Donor comments included calls for operational results and more coordination with other regional organisms. Based on these comments, the consultant will prepare a draft report to UNODC by June 10, and a final report by end of June. Mission believes that the USG should support a third phase for the Paris Pact. However we recommend that we start working with other donors to find ways to improve the efficiency of the Paris Pact before the consultant submits his final report. END SUMMARY.

Briefing Donors: Expert Roundtable not Expert Enough

2. (SBU) The UNODC hired UK's Omega Consultancy to carry out a five-year review of the Paris Pact Initiative. On May 14, Omega's Neil Bailey briefed donor and other member countries. He summarized his sources, methods, preliminary findings, and next steps. The Paris Pact is completing its second phase, which began in January 2007 and will end in December 2009. For his evaluation, Bailey attended Pact meetings, interviewed meeting participants and senior UNODC officials, and reviewed Pact documents from previous expert roundtables. He concluded that if the Paris Pact were to be extended to a third phase, it should "extend by depth, not breadth." He was encouraged that host governments were well-disposed to the Pact's National Security Analysts (NSAs). He considered the large Pact footprint, now extending from Afghanistan into central Asia and beyond, as unsustainable. He questioned the cost and utility of the expert roundtables which, by his calculations, absorbed nearly \$1.4

million of the Pact's \$3.2 million budget for Phase II. (Of the rest of the budget, \$800,000 went to ADAM, and \$1.1 million to NSA support). The Phase II roundtables, in his view, also proved less useful, as countries sent participants based on rank or political importance rather than technical expertise. That, coupled with the growing number of participants (more than 100), resulted in political recommendations that had little practical utility.

ADAM Suffers from Lack of Use

13. (SBU) Bailey commented that the Automated Donor Assistance Mechanism (ADAM) suffered technical problems during the first phase which have been resolved. However, donors have not been using ADAM during Phase II. (Note: ADAM is intended to provide a database of assistance programs in Afghanistan, in order to avoid duplication of donor programs. However, this requires donors to update their programs regularly, something which donors apparently have not been doing. End Note.) Counselor noted that seizures of precursor chemicals under Operation TARCET were helpful because they provided concrete, tangible results to justify support for the Paris Pact. Counselor also highlighted that donor ambassadors, in an informal meeting on the margins of the last Policy Consultative Group meeting in December, had proposed establishing concrete benchmarks to measure the Pact's effectiveness. The Russian and Austrian representatives echoed this sentiment.

14. (SBU) Bailey characterized the Pact roundtables as having become examples of "narco-tourism." The 15 roundtables held in the last five years have consumed a majority of the Paris Pact budget. He noted that in 2003, experts attended the Pact roundtables, but in

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2006, experts were fewer in number. Instead, countries have been sending delegates because of their rank or political influence. As a result, Bailey claimed, it is difficult for the round tables to reach meaningful, practical recommendations.

15. (SBU) Bailey acknowledged that nothing much has been done with many of the roundtables' recommendations. Some of the recommendations from the last three years could have been taken forward, but were not. He lamented the increasingly political nature of the participants. He proposed that donor countries could remedy this by restricting the use of their funds for the participation of relevant experts only. Bailey also noted the importance of limiting the size, number, attendance, and agenda, as well as changing the format of the roundtables.

16. (SBU) Counselor commented that instead of holding annual roundtables on different topics, Pact partners should focus on implementation of the recommendations produced by the 15 round tables of the last five years. She proposed that some future round tables could be devoted to reviewing the progress of implementing past recommendations. Russia voiced enthusiastic support for a third phase of the Pact, but advocated a "comprehensive, balanced approach" consisting of partnerships with other regional organizations for the third phase, such as Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Russia also voiced its desire to expand the Paris Pact mandate to include tracking financial flows. (Note: In various Vienna fora related to Afghanistan, Russia has always tried to give prominence to the regional organizations which Russia leads, such as the SCO. It has also been a longstanding, albeit unsuccessful, advocate of some kind of financial security belt around Afghanistan. End Note.)

17. (SBU) Bailey noted that the roundtables generated an "unmeasurable political benefit" simply because they occurred, but that operational results were now more important than ever. He asked in conclusion if donor countries thought the Paris Pact should be extended to a third phase, or "left to wither." Russia said it would "remain engaged" but would also consider how to make the Pact's approach more comprehensive to include issues like financial flows. Several countries, including the U.S., said they would have to report back to capital. Bailey closed by noting his draft report was due to UNODC June 10th, and the final report was due at the end

of June. He added that countries may email him with further questions and comments at neilbailey@aol.com.

More Briefing: Afghanistan and Iran Clash

¶18. (SBU) Bailey repeated his findings to a group of about 15 Pact members after his briefing to the donors. (Note: Some of the donors, such as Canada, did not attend the earlier briefing. End Note.) Before he could finish, the Afghan Ambassador asked Pact members to take note of the drug problems in Pakistan and Iran. The Iranian Ambassador disagreed, noting the most problematic element in the drug supply chain is the production of heroin in Afghanistan, in its many labs. He added that while Iran considers the Pact to be a productive forum for exchanging views - and is satisfied with its outcomes - it finds the Pact lacking in action. He urged more action, specifically to focus on three fronts - production, transit areas, and consumption.

¶19. (SBU) Canada remarked on the difficulty producing actions from the roundtables, since the so-called action recommendations are often vague. The Afghan Ambassador proposed to have future roundtables focus on something practical, like precursors. Bailey reminded him that there was a precursor component in the 2006 program review he conducted, but that recommended actions on precursors were never used. He suggested reviewing demand and supply side projects in his report. The Russian representative repeated Russia's position on regional organizations and financial flows (See para 7 above). Egypt acknowledged the need for high-level action, and underlined the importance of evaluating program effectiveness. Bailey suggested that future roundtables could be used to review the implementation of recommendations. Iran voiced support for the Canadian and Russian positions on the Pact, adding that there could be one roundtable of technical specialists. Bailey stressed that any such expert group would be a small group to replace, not supplement, the roundtables.

Comment

¶10. (SBU) The Paris Pact is a pioneer initiative for tackling the Afghan drug problem on a regional and technical basis. It has

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served an important political function by bringing together experts from countries which may not be on speaking terms otherwise. However, as the consultant has observed, Paris Pact roundtables are losing their practical purpose and becoming increasingly political.

While Mission believes the Pact is worthy of continuing U.S. support, we recommend that we start brainstorming with other donors in the coming weeks to determine what actions we can take to improve the Pact's efficiency before the consultant submits his final report. END COMMENT.

SCHULTE